More From Each Hour

How tools, skills, and work conditions affect output

GE.3.1 "Define labor productivity and explain the basic factors which affect productivity."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the definition of labor productivity, circle factors that affect it, and draw an arrow from each circled factor to the passage's explanation of its effect.

A Bakery's Busy Morning

1. At a neighborhood bakery, four workers spend five hours making 80 loaves of bread. Together, they supply 20 worker-hours of labor, so the bakery produces four loaves per worker-hour. Labor productivity means the amount of output produced per unit of labor, often measured per worker or per hour worked. It describes how much workers make with their time, not how hard they try or how much they earn. If the same crew makes 100 loaves in 20 worker-hours tomorrow, productivity rises to five loaves per worker-hour. The measure compares output with labor used, rather than output alone.

2. The owner notices that kneading dough by hand takes much of the morning. She buys a mixer that handles larger batches while the crew prepares pans. With the same four workers and five-hour shift, the bakery now makes 120 loaves, or six per worker-hour. The mixer is physical capital, a tool that helps labor produce more in the same time. Still, a machine is not a guarantee of higher productivity. Workers must learn to operate it safely, and its size must suit the bakery. Training builds worker skills, sometimes called human capital, so fewer batches are ruined.

3. The crew also changes its schedule. One worker weighs ingredients while another starts the oven, instead of everyone waiting to use the scale. This division of tasks cuts idle time, leaving more minutes for baking. On some days, flour deliveries arrive late and the crew cannot begin mixing; even skilled workers with a good machine produce fewer loaves during the shift. Reliable supplies matter because labor needs materials to turn effort into output. When comparing productivity across days, the owner checks worker-hours as well as loaves, since adding extra workers can raise total output without necessarily raising output per worker-hour.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How is labor productivity measured at the bakery, and what is it on the first day?

2. How does the mixer affect the bakery's labor productivity? Use the numbers in the passage.

3. Why can training affect productivity even after the bakery buys a mixer?

4. Explain one way the new schedule and one way late flour deliveries affect loaves produced per worker-hour.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a workplace other than a bakery. In four or five sentences, define its labor productivity using a specific output and labor unit, then explain how two different changes could affect it if labor time stays the same.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the definition of labor productivity, circle factors that affect it, and draw an arrow from each circled factor to the passage's explanation of its effect. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How is labor productivity measured at the bakery, and what is it on the first day?	**Divide loaves by worker-hours. Four workers working five hours supply 20 worker-hours, so 80 ÷ 20 = 4 loaves per worker-hour.**
2	How does the mixer affect the bakery's labor productivity? Use the numbers in the passage.	**With the same 20 worker-hours, the mixer helps the crew make 120 rather than 80 loaves. Productivity rises from four to six loaves per worker-hour.**
3	Why can training affect productivity even after the bakery buys a mixer?	**Training helps workers operate the mixer safely and ruin fewer batches, increasing usable output from their labor time.**
4	Explain one way the new schedule and one way late flour deliveries affect loaves produced per worker-hour.	**The new schedule cuts waiting, leaving more time to bake and potentially raising output per worker-hour. Late flour delays mixing, reducing the loaves workers can make during a shift.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a community garden, labor productivity could be measured as kilograms of vegetables harvested per worker-hour. If volunteers spend the same number of hours but use sturdy harvest carts, they can move more produce and spend less time carrying it. If the garden plants crops closer to its washing station, volunteers can harvest more kilograms in those same hours because they walk less. Both changes increase output per worker-hour without adding labor time.

Accept other accurate explanations that compare output with labor used. For Part 3, look for a specific output per unit of labor and two distinct changes with clear effects on that measure.